

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXPUNGEMENT RESTORES MOST FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment at comments made earlier this month by Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich that he would veto a bill that would restore voting rights to felons.

Disenfranchisement is a problem plaguing society. Nationally, more than four million Americans are not allowed to vote as a result of laws that prohibit voting by felons or ex-felons. In 48 states, with the exception of Maine and Vermont, and the District of Columbia prisoners cannot vote. In 36 states, felons on probation or parole are disenfranchised and in 11 states, a felony conviction can result in a lifetime sanction long after the completion of a sentence. Unfortunately disenfranchisement is not a color-blind problem. This fundamental obstacle to participation in our democracy is aggravated by racial disparities within the criminal justice system, resulting in an estimated 13 percent of black men unable to vote. In 10 states with the highest Hispanic populations, including California, Latinos are as much as three times more likely to lose their right to vote from felony disenfranchisement than the population at large.

The denial of black and Latino ex-felons from membership and participation in our electorate is a glaring disgrace to a country that prides itself on its equitable criminal justice system. It is said that once prisoners have "paid their debt to society," they are free to re-enter it. But are they truly free? The answer is no if some of their fundamental rights aren't restored at the conclusion of their sentence. Not only are some ex-felons not allowed to vote, but employers hesitate to contract workers with criminal records and participation in certain housing and training programs is elusive to them as well. It is shameful and unfair to punish ex-felons even after they have served their sentence. We must avail to these citizens every opportunity to regain their dignity so they do not return to a life of crime. The unfortunate alternative is for society to continue to be victimized by ex-offenders who, having given up all hope of employment, resort to careers in crime.

It is my belief that expungement allows for a fresh start for reformed ex-prisoners. That is why I have reintroduced H.R. 662, the Second Chance for Ex-Offenders Act of 2005, which would permit the expungement of federal records for certain nonviolent criminal offenses. Gov. Ehrlich's comments that fully restoring voting rights to felons is inappropriate are in and of themselves egregious. If we continue to deny all ex-felons the right to vote and continue to punish them even after they have served their time, then what debt have they paid to society during their incarceration? What message are we sending not only to ex-

offenders but the world as we continue to tout ourselves as the leader of the free, Democratic world, if we do not allow some of our citizens the right to vote?

Currently, some states have reformed their laws to allow ex-offenders to become active participants in their government. Several states, such as Kentucky and Illinois, permit the expungement of the records of certain ex-offenders who have violated state laws. Voting rights advocates and legislators are pushing for such initiatives in Virginia. In the governor's great state of Maryland, dozens of House Democrats have co-sponsored legislation that would allow about 150,000 ex-felons to vote this year and the state Democratic Party has endorsed the proposal. To unilaterally turn a deaf ear to constituents, advocacy groups and fellow lawmakers is an offense to democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that Gov. Ehrlich comes to realize the type of damage his vow to forbid restoration of voting rights to ex-prisoners has done to disadvantaged communities in his state. It is his vow that I find inappropriate.

TRIBUTE TO ALICE GRAY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with sadness today to honor my friend Alice Gray who died on February 10, 2006, at the age of 88. Surrounded by family and friends, she passed away peacefully in her Santa Rosa home. Known throughout Sonoma County for her leadership in the civil rights movement, Alice's strength, motherly warmth, and common sense were a hallmark of her style.

Originally from Longview, Texas, Alice moved to California during World War II to join her husband Gilbert who was working in the shipyards in Marin City. In 1950 the family moved to Santa Rosa where there were few other black people, and Alice and Gilbert soon became community activists.

In 1954 they co-founded the Sonoma Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and led pickets to integrate local businesses. Alice also helped establish the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club in Sonoma, the Marin Rod and Gun Club, and the Community Baptist Church which has been led by the Reverend James Coffee for 45 years.

In 1992 Alice and Gilbert launched the Gray Foundation, with an initial contribution of \$150,000, to provide funds to students with the desire to further their education and serve their community. The Grays declared, "The Gray Foundation is our effort to reverse unemployment, declining social values and violent self-fear. We seek to put our resources behind our words (put up or shut up) . . . As a people, we have to put our growing re-

sources to use in support of our heroes/heroines, our heritage, as well as persons and places of learning. We must listen and learn from each the traditions of self-help and self-reliance that once gave our people strength."

The Foundation's programs embody that philosophy, from its scholarships for high school graduates to In Partnership, a unique enrichment program at Brook Hill Elementary School which focuses on the development of tools that young children will need for school success. Its theme is "Students Taking an Active Role" (the children are known as "STARS") and includes the South Park Grandmothers' Club whose members, including Alice, went regularly to the school to be there for at-risk kids.

Alice's husband Gilbert passed away in 1997 after 62 years of marriage. She remained active, including a drive to Los Angeles with her grandson Curtis last fall to attend the 18th annual California NAACP Convention. Always a high-spirited driver (called "wheeling" by the family), she drove for 100 miles on the trip, her first time behind the wheel since her husband's death. At the Convention, she met with the new president, Bruce Gordon, and many old friends from all over the state such as Willie Brown and Mervyn Dymally. She and Curtis attended seminars, including one on same sex marriage. Both of them were overwhelmed at the concluding banquet where Curtis was given the honor of doing an invocation and all 450 attendees sang Happy Birthday to Alice.

Alice is survived by 7 great, great grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren, 32 grandchildren, 5 siblings, numerous nieces and nephews, eight of her nine children—Ann Gray Byrd, William Gray, Dorothy Woodward, Ida Johnson, James Gray, Charles Gray, Aubrey Gray, Robert Gray—and many close friends and admirers.

Mr. Speaker, it was the Alice's and Gilbert's desire that "the Gray Foundation serve as an example to others so that they, too, will put up, because we cannot afford to shut-up and still survive." Alice Gray herself was a shining example of someone who "put up", inspiring so many with her actions and her heart. I will miss my friend but know that her message of hope and compassion will continue to spread throughout the community and beyond.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPHINE CATHRINE GAJDA

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding resident of the Third Congressional District of Illinois, Josephine Cathrine Gajda, upon her retirement. Over the years, Josephine has been a distinguished contributor to the community, as well as an exemplary mother. Her love of nature, reading,

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

and visiting with her grandchildren embody genuine and honorable values.

After graduating from St. John of God Elementary School and Lourdes High School, Josephine's experience in child care, banking, and at Dominick's enabled her to serve the community and its residents. During this time, she also nurtured and raised five children (Cheryl, Stephen, David, Kristen, and Melissa) and is currently the grandmother of six grandchildren (Zack, Andrew, Dakota, Emily, Kristina, and Nicholas).

Josephine's patience, kindness, and ability proved to be invaluable in the workplace, but also at home. As an outstanding parent, she imparted these important values to her children and grandchildren.

I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to stand with me today and take this opportunity to recognize Josephine Catherine Gajda for her many achievements, and wish her well in retirement. As Josephine truly sets an example to the Third District, we also thank her for her role in making our community a better place to live.

HONORING PRAVEEN CHAUDHARI

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and recognize a good friend and leader in the advanced research community, the retiring director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, Dr. Praveen Chaudhari.

I am deeply proud to represent BNL and its dedicated employees. I have thoroughly enjoyed my working relationship with Dr. Chaudhari, who is a world-class physicist running a world-class research facility. It is an honor and privilege for me to recognize his numerous accomplishments, steadfast dedication and hard work throughout a distinguished research career dedicated to the advancement of science.

Dr. Chaudhari entered the field of physics by earning a B.S. from the Indian Institute of Technology as well as an M.S. and Sc.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He applied this knowledge to research and the publication of over 150 technical papers and 20 patents throughout 36 years as an IBM scientist, manager, and recipient of numerous honors for his contributions to innovative scientific technology.

Through three years at the helm of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, Dr. Chaudhari persevered over many challenges while making tremendous progress in advanced energy research and technology. His tenacity and firm resolve have proven to be among BNL's most invaluable assets. I have witnessed his leadership and determination first-hand, particularly as the lab moved forward with break-through research projects such as the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider and the National Synchrotron Light Source-II (NSLS-II).

It was my pleasure to work closely with Dr. Chaudhari and my colleagues in New York's congressional delegation to help BNL advance its mission. On behalf of New York's first congressional district, I extend my gratitude and congratulations to Dr. Chaudhari for a brilliant

career along with best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors. His vision and passion for scientific discovery will always be remembered, and his outstanding advocacy and leadership will be missed.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES FACING THE CARIBBEAN UNDER GLOBALIZATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge the challenges facing Caribbean countries, and their leadership and to acknowledge the vital roles they play in the global community. As an example of the richness of the thinking in the region on the challenges faced by small states in their transition to the global economy, I enter in the RECORD a speech delivered by His Excellency Michael King, Ambassador of Barbados to the United States of America and Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. Comments made by Ambassador King were part of his address to the annual general meeting of the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA), a membership organization dedicated to the preservation of Caribbean cultural and natural resources, held Friday, February 3, 2006.

Currently, the Caribbean region is undergoing a transformation, but changes could come with a steep price. Countries such as Jamaica and Barbados have seen a boom in real estate, primarily for local housing development and further growth will necessarily be contingent on the greater exploitation of natural resources. In Trinidad, the lucrative oil windfall may open opportunities for industrialization which will not only use scarce resources but will bring up concerns regarding safe disposal of waste byproducts and health ramifications in nearby communities. Natural disasters also pose a challenge as the Caribbean and the United States observed with the destruction of Grenada in 2004 by Hurricane Ivan. All governments must boost their preparedness in order to prevent devastation to families, homes and businesses.

In his remarks, Ambassador King explains that because of the CCA's unique mission, they are in a position to outreach to members who can influence change. "Having gone through a period of dormancy, the organization must act quickly not just to confirm its relevance but to provide the mechanism whereby it can become the catalyst for a resurgence of the environmental movement in the Caribbean," Ambassador King said in his remarks. The Ambassador suggests continued collaboration between CCA and organizations dedicated to promoting agriculture and tourism in order to boost CCA's efficiency. He also recommends CCA becoming a vehicle for interventions related to community-based educational programs and alliances with fledgling non-governmental organizations working in the field.

Mr. Speaker, again please join me in acknowledging the merit of Ambassador King's remarks regarding the challenges facing the Caribbean in this era of globalization and what can be done to protect and preserve the Caribbean's cultural resources and environment.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK EGGER

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Frank Egger of Fairfax, CA, who recently completed 10 terms—40 years—on the Fairfax City Council, including seven stints as mayor. The longest continuously serving city council member in the State, Frank's tenure was marked by his environmental activism and his passion for his town.

A San Francisco native, Frank lived in Santa Rosa for several years where he met his wife, Ronita Sundin, while modeling at a fashion show at the Flamingo Hotel. The couple moved to Fairfax in 1959 to raise their daughter Lori, who now has two children of her own. Frank left college to support his family and spent 44 years driving a bread truck for Sara Lee. He became active in North Bay labor issues, fighting for the rights of blue-collar workers, and eventually served as president of Teamsters Local No. 484.

In the 1960s Frank began his life's calling as an activist in both State and local issues when he perceived the environmental threats facing California and when a graceful Victorian bank in his hometown was replaced by a modern building.

Frank cofounded Friends of the Eel River, preventing the building of the Dos Rios Dam and is still fighting water diversions that could harm that stream's fisheries. He has had long working relationships with environmental pioneers including David Brower, Todd Steiner, Marty Griffin, and the late Peter Behr—with whom he developed the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, signed into law by Governor Reagan. He also served as one of the State's first coastal commissioners, spearheaded a State antinuclear initiative, and is a member of the statewide Environmental Health Legislative Working Group Pesticide Committee.

Locally, Frank was active in many key groups including the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority, GGNRA Board of Control, Marin County Congestion Management Agency, Marin Telecommunications Agency, and many others over his 40-year tenure. He has also been a fixture at meetings dealing with water issues in both Marin and Sonoma counties.

However, he will be most remembered for his leadership in preserving Fairfax's small-town character through his role in slowing its development and safeguarding its environment and the wages of its workforce. He was instrumental in the creation of the 500-acre Elliot Nature Preserve, enactment of strict antipesticide ordinances and a high living-wage law, and protection of the historic 23-acre Marin Town and Country Club from large-scale development.

In the cauldron of local politics, all would agree that Frank acted out of conviction for his town, for the environment, and for the well being of workers.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have worked with Frank Egger, a brave and caring activist, whose years of service are an inspiration to all of us who believe in fighting for our values and speaking out for progressive causes. I know he will continue this fight, and I intend to be by his side.